

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

STAFF NOTE

Review Item:

Establishing a Kentucky foundation for education innovation

Applicable Statute or Regulation:

KRS 156.035, 158.645, 158.6451

History/Background:

Existing Policy. It is widely held that to increase student achievement for all Kentucky students requires effective leaders in every school, effective educators in every classroom, and healthy and engaged students who come to school ready to learn. This requires providing adequate support and resources so these requirements can be met. With local, state and federal funding streams all being affected by budget cuts and lower tax revenues, it is imperative that we ensure we are taking advantage of all possible funding sources in order to provide the best learning environment in our schools.

It is this commitment that has led staff to do research on what other states are doing to secure philanthropic sources of revenue that are being specifically used to promote innovation in schools and increased student achievement. Prior to the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA), the Kentucky Education Foundation was in existence for the purpose of providing additional funding for education. The foundation was dissolved in 1993. Currently, Kentucky needs a non-profit entity to focus on obtaining non-traditional funding for education innovation.

The primary focus of research on this subject has been the model used by Colorado. In 2007, Colorado established the Colorado Legacy Foundation. The foundation was originally operated by the state department of education but since 2009 it has been an independent 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation that serves as a critical friend and partner to the Colorado Department of Education in the effective implementation of good public policy. The foundation identifies promising practices, invests in innovative work, recommends policy, evaluates results, and shares its findings with all Colorado school districts and schools.

Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) staff have had conversations with Colorado Legacy Foundation staff and have been reviewing the development plan and key legal issues. KDE staff wish to begin a discussion with the board about establishing such a foundation in Kentucky.

Policy Issue(s):

Primary policy issues are related to the process that would be used to establish the foundation and how such a foundation would operate in Kentucky.

Impact on Getting to Proficiency:

In order to achieve the goal of every student graduating college/career ready, it is essential that we provide schools and districts with resources that are adequate to ensure student success. By creating a foundation focused on securing other sources of support for innovation and student achievement, achieving the goals is more realistic.

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